



Planning & Development Services

Boise City Hall, 2nd Floor
150 N. Capitol Boulevard
P. O. Box 500
Boise, Idaho 83701-0500

Phone: 208/384-3830
Fax: 208/384-3753
TDD/TTY: 800/377-3529
Website: www.cityofboise.org/pds

Historic Preservation Commission

Worksession / Hearing Minutes of August 25, 2008

Commission Members Christopher Pooser, Chairman, Scott Chandler, Cathy Sewell, Barbara Dawson, Betsy McFadden, Stephen Smith, Mara Truslow

Members Present Sarah Schafer, Matt Halitsky, Teresa Sobotka, Nicki Heckenlively

WORKSESSION

Item #1 / DRH08-00230 / Pat Bronken / 1601 N. 21st Street

Requests Historic Preservation approval to remodel the structure including but not limited to converting the garage to living space, relocating the front door, add on to the front and rear of the main dwelling, construct a chimney, construct a basement, construct a single-story, single-car garage and remove a tree on property located in an R-1CH (Single Family Residential with Historic Overlay) zone. (*Deferred to worksession at the July 28, 2008 hearing.*)

MATT HALITSKY: It is my understanding that this item was deferred last month because the Commission couldn't reach a consensus on the vote on the motion. We were going to revisit it earlier this month but the applicant couldn't make it so now we're here again to discuss it.

GREG DENMARK (Applicant's Representative): Distributed copies to Commission. Our biggest issue was that garage door. That is something that we're not willing to concede based on the fact that we really cannot increase the size of the house without affecting that area.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: Are these the same renderings that were provided...?

GREG DENMARK: These are the latest versions that we discussed that we talked about lowering that front dormer. Basically what I've done is I've taken every elevation and have done a proposed and an existing. At this point we did lower that front gable. It's still a little bit wider but we did lower that. Other than that it basically comes down to that garage door. We're willing to put that garage door on

the new detached garage. That's on the very last page. Other than that the house...you can see the square footage on the original floor plans which I didn't provide new ones for...nothing changed...that we are very small as it is. There's really nowhere to put that kitchen without completely taking out a huge, very established Sycamore right behind the house. We are coming back a little bit as it is.

PAT BRONKEN (Applicant / Owner): For us to change anything...we tried to see if we could put the kitchen somewhere else...then it becomes a huge remodel. I was tried to change my house as little possible and enlarge it as little as possible to get the little bit of space that I needed. The garage door...I had hoped to put on my new garage so it would look like my old garage. In fact, I talked to somebody about putting an automatic garage door opener on it.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: The front door is now at the side?

GREG DENMARK: It currently is.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: And you've left it as a crack entry?

GREG DENMARK: Yeah. We moved the door to where the window is. In the original meeting it came down to the fact that right now it's a small living room and the front door goes right into that living room and the dining room is so small that we just want to turn that into an entry area not really changing anything interior wise it's just more functional. Right now furniture placements are almost impossible.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: If you're going to the left...

PAT BRONKEN: Right now if you enter to the left you come right into my living room which takes up a chunk of my living room and my dining room is only 6 ½ ft. by a little less than 8 ft. so we wanted to make that an entryway and then bump out the kitchen to make a dining room which still isn't that big. I think its 9 ½ by 10 something. Then take my garage because I can't use because I can't get a car in there...I can get my car in there but I can't open the doors...

CHAIRMAN POOSER: What's that mean? You can't open the doors.

PAT BRONKEN: I can drive my car in but both of us at one time can't open the doors and get out of my car very easily because the walls are...

CHAIRMAN POOSER: You have to park to one side or the other?

PAT BRONKEN: Yeah, so I don't park in there because it's not worth it. My kitchen is literally the size of a closet and I want a regular stove and regular refrigerator.

GREG DENMARK: I would like to say something. Julie represented in the aspect...she had a lot of people write letters stating that she's trying to increase the size of her daycare. It has nothing to do with that.

PAT BRONKEN: I can't. I'm what I can be now. There's no more...I'm not trying to get any more kids. I wouldn't have more kids if I could get more kids. I'm licensed for 12 and I only take six or seven because that's all I want. My parents just know they bump into each other all the time coming and going and it would just be nice to have an entryway.

CHAIRMAN POOSER: We had a variety of opinions on the garage door so I'm interested to have people's comments.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): Did you guys propose any changes at all?

GREG DENMARK: We conceded to lowering the front gable to the height that it is now. Other than that we tried some redesign on the interior and there was nothing there that we could do without literally adding an entire back addition to keep that garage.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): I just wanted a record about you going into that has changed from the hearing.

PAT BRONKEN: One thing I did want say...I'm not sure who said it, but said it might not look very nice taking out the garage door and putting a garage window in, but I plan to put a whole new skin of stucco around the whole house so that it won't look like somebody's taken something out and put something in. I didn't know if you guys automatically assumed I was going to do that, but I am. Somebody made a comment about the garage door...like in 50 years that when you're walking by and there's a garage door there and you'll say, "Why is there a garage door there and there's no driveway or anything". I thought that was a good point.

GREG DENMARK: That's why we drew a couple plants out front.

PAT BRONKEN: That was a good point. I just thought yes, I could put a wall behind the garage door but then I'd have no windows. If I keep the windows that I have they are at eye level by the time we raise the floor to make it consistent with the rest of the house. I had hoped to use the garage door on my new garage in the alley.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: Similar to what was said in the previous meeting, I can certainly understand the desire of some Commissioners to keep the garage door because of it's historic...it's always been there. It's been a part of this all along, but to either leave it as a garage doesn't make sense for the reasons you've cited. It's

usability factor is very low and keeping the garage doors there just for the visual impact of the garage doors it does create the, "Why is there a garage door there"...after there is going to be vegetation and other things in front of it with no driveway leading up to it. What you've done as far as the revision on the smaller of the two gables on the front...that helps...and also just the way you've made those drawings of proposed versus existing...if you flip back and forth between the two and really the only thing that jumps out initially...you can find all sorts of things that are different but when it jumps out is the fact that the garage doors are gone. I would again support the fact that this is not inappropriate. It's not necessarily from a historic view point the most perfect approach but I can certainly understand why you propose it. If what you've proposed is approved will result in a design that in the long term no one will say, "That's a lot different than it used to be".

PAT BRONKEN: And I don't want to get rid of the garage door. I just want to put it somewhere else.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): Both sides felt really strong last time. Obviously that's the reason you ended up where you did. Rather than both sides restating their positions it comes down to does the gable change anybody's mind and if it doesn't are there other ideas before we get into the, we like it, we don't like it...

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: What we need is to have an odd number of Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: We do. We have an odd number.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: But this is the worksession. We don't know how many will be at the hearing when we hear this.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): Did you notice this so they could take a vote if it came down to it?

SARAH SCHAFFER: It's on all of the worksession agendas and it was deferred to date specific to today.

TERESA SOBOTKA: You could take a vote if it came down to it.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN: We could?

COMMISSIONER TRUSLOW: I am not familiar with the historic quality of this home. All I've seen thus far is this is this blueprint. I don't feel comfortable with...

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: She was not part of the original discussion.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): She would have to...well you guys never came to a vote or anything. She would have to review the file and get up to date on what it is and if at the end of this worksession if you felt like you were up to speed on it after they've talked about the issues then you could vote. Otherwise you can't. I don't feel in this particular situation that it's necessary that she would have heard...because you guys are going to recap...

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN: Was everybody else here?

PAT BRONKEN: You weren't...but everybody else was.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN: I concur with Commissioner Chandler that I don't think...that the people that were in favor of the original application will still be in favor of it and...

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): That's why I'm trying to get you guys to see if there's any other ideas. That's what the worksession was supposed to be for. Is there some other idea rather than trying to break each other down?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: If I look at the existing front elevation as proposed to the proposed front elevation you've got one window in the garage conversion area...I understand the rationale because of hanging cabinets and windows at certain heights, etc. We've got two windows in the garage?

PAT BRONKEN: Just to break that one window into two?

GREG DENMARK: You'd lose you're upper cabinets.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: Yeah...you're going to lose some upper cabinets.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: You have a 3 ft. wide?

GREG DENMARK: You'd probably end up with a 12 inch upper on that one side and a return upper on that side. You'd have a lot of glass.

PAT BRONKEN: I wouldn't mind making a little bit bigger, but I don't really want the whole width of the room windows.

GREG DENMARK: Right now they're approximately a little over 3 ft. by 2 ft. There's about 6 ft. of glass or 12 sq. ft.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: What is that window now?

GREG DENMARK: Since it's a garage door it's a really odd number so I would probably say...it's an 8 ft. door so half the 8 ft. would be 4 ft. minus the sides so it's probably right around 3 ft. wide...each one.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: What are you calling on the addition?

GREG DENMARK: It's a 30/30.

PAT BRONKEN: Right now my kitchen has...

GREG DENMARK: It's a 2 ft. 10 inch by 2 ft. 10 inch that's in there currently.

PAT BRONKEN: It's bigger than existing it's just not...

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): She's willing to go with some of the windows but would hate to have to keep all of them. What do you feel about that?

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: Looking at the proposed right elevation...there's the door that I assume that's at the top of the stairway going downstairs...the window to the left of that is that in the kitchen area?

GREG DENMARK: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: So you really don't have a significant of windows on...

PAT BRONKEN: This side butts right up to my neighbors.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: What if you were to, instead of the 30/30's maybe two 6/ 30's or something like that which wouldn't necessarily need to be twice the size of that but getting two of them with a mullion between them of some sort. That would achieve a similar look.

GREG DENMARK: Probably about six inches...

PAT BRONKEN: I just don't want the whole width because then I lose so much cabinet space. It's bigger than what I have but I'd prefer to have one window but I would go for...

CHAIRMAN POOSER: That is an option of adding more glass across there.

GREG DENMARK: And create less wing walls on each side of the window.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON: Yeah...so it would be similar to the window configuration there only shorter.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN: Would that sway anybody's opinion?

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: Speak up guys...

COMMISSIONER SMITH: So the idea would be put two windows similar to what's on the garage door?

PAT BRONKEN: Yes. Not quite as big though.

GREG DENMARK: Most likely it would be 3 ft. high by 3 ft. 6 inches wide...two of them...so that's still 7 ft. of glass...even if we did 3 ft. wide of glass you're still looking at 6 ft. of glass.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: If you were to do two of them at 2 ½ ft. wide...

GREG DENMARK: Oh, 5 ft. Yeah, that's actually...

COMMISSIONER SMITH: I thought Staff's suggestion was they wanted to leave the garage door period. Putting two new windows in it doesn't necessarily solve that issue right?

MATT HALITSKY: That sounds like Julie...yeah.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): Well at this time it is up to the Commission to try to come up with something that makes it congruous with what you have in the neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: To the best of my recollection...I could live with that.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: In reviewing my minutes clearly the...I sided with Staff in their report and analysis and made reference to the Interior Standards for interior arrangements before any kind of additions were made. I should say that I'm an architect so space planning is something I do all time and rearranging of spaces. I looked at it from that perspective. My comments in regard to down the road someone could come in and...I've worked on a project where we took two single car garage doors and converted it into living space behind that...kept the openings but did something to make it look integral to the house. It wasn't a historic home, but it was an old ranch home. There are certainly solutions out there to integrate it in, keep the opening, keep the look, but make the space work. With that said, the other thing too is there's the basement egress out that's right in front of that window as well as the new front gable as well. I still feel that Julie was on with her analysis, but as far as

something that is congruous...yeah, this looks congruous with the neighborhood. It's got the forms; it's got the windows, the gables...that all looks good. But, as Julie pointed out it's what it does to the house itself. It doesn't look like there's...we don't see any attempt at any kind of interior rearrangement to see if there are other options. I'm still sticking with my initial thoughts on this. My comments at the previous...in no way was I thinking the existing door had to stay and you had to do a bunch of stuff behind it to make it all work although it certainly is an option that could have been done, but you certainly want the space to function as you need it to.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: The door is a big sticking point for me. Do I understand that you can't...if you leave the door that you cannot design the kitchen with the door still in place? Let me ask a follow up question. Is it required...I heard you say that the windows are going to be at a strange level? Do you have to raise the floor?

GREG DENMARK: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: Why?

GREG DENMARK: Obviously it's a very small level and to actually have two steps going in and out of your kitchen into any dining area and any other living area is not very functional.

PAT BRONKEN: I've lived in my house close to 30 years and I plan on living there forever and I would like to not be old and have to go up and down the stairs.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: That's fair. I just wanted to ask to find out if there was an option of building the kitchen at a different level. So if the garage doors remain and you had to raise the floor the windows will be at a strange level...thigh high I believe you said?

GREG DENMARK: Yeah...most likely. You wouldn't even be able to put cabinets up there.

COMMISSIONER SMITH: You'd lose the ability to look out your kitchen window.

PAT BRONKEN: When we tried flipping the kitchen so the kitchen part was in the back then I'd lose like a quarter of it which is...I'm going from a little kitchen to a bigger kitchen but it wouldn't be that much bigger if I flip it over...the windows are still at thigh level.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: One alternative I could see which would be not a positive alternative would be essentially...first of all you'd take the garage door off, rebuild it based on the new proposed front elevation, you use the old garage door...you essentially put it on the front...you build them so it appears as though it's

functional and then deal with the glass such that it is not transparent...you wouldn't notice it from the outside because you basically can't tell when glass is dark that you can't see through it and rearrange the kitchen so that you put another window on the north side. You can do all of that and you'd retain the garage door but it would still look strange. I'm not advocating that. I hope you can do something like that but you're doing it only to retain the appearance of a historic garage, one which at this point is not usable.

GREG DENMARK: We're also taking an unconditioned space and converting it to conditioned and that's an old garage door and very drafty.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: You build a wall...

GREG DENMARK: I understand. It's going to look like a garage door added to a wall.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: Nevertheless...

COMMISSIONER SMITH: To cut to the chase here, I've convinced if they put the other two windows you'd have an additional for approving this if that's the direction you want to go. However, we do have a new member who may still be tied.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: I would feel as though our new member may not feel as though she is in a position to necessarily vote on this given the circumstances without going through a substantial amount of education on this. If we are able to do this without a tie we could possibly proceed.

TERESA SOBOTKA (Legal): Now it comes down to can you vote tonight? Do you need to see a redesign or do you have a concept in your mind clear enough of what these windows would like so that you can give a specific condition and motion.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: I'm very comfortable making a motion that's specific enough to deal with what we have in front of us with an alteration to it.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE DRH08-00230 BASED ON THE REDESIGN PRESENTED TONIGHT WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT THE SINGLE WINDOW THAT IS TO BE PUT WHERE THE EXISTING GARAGE DOOR IS NOW SHALL BE REPLACED WITH TWO WINDOWS WITH A NOMINAL SIZE OF 26" WIDE BY 30" HIGH THAT WILL VISUALLY THE SAME DISTANCE APART THAT THE EXISTING GARAGE DOOR WINDOWS CURRENTLY HAVE.

GREG DENMARK: What kind of mullion in between is your recommendation? Right now we have about 8 inches between the two windows.

PAT BRONKEN: The existing windows on the back...I have a double window in my daughter's bedroom that's two double hung windows, but they're.

GREG DENMARK: But they're mullioned together.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: I would envision something that would at least visually have the distance apart that the garage door windows have now.

GREG DENMARK: So we'll stay with about 8 inches.

COMMISSIONER CHANDLER: So you have two distinct windows and not in one mullion.

COMMISSIONER McFADDEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Going back to the minutes...what I stated is and I think I asked the question to the Commission on whether as a Commission we're going to move forward with looking at projects and the historic integrity of that or whether it's congruous with the neighborhood. I don't think that we've had that discussion yet in the general sense but as I mentioned I think this project is congruous I just think that it is significantly destroying the historic integrity. Until we have that discussion and we have some sort of sense of direction I will not be supporting the application, but I do think, as I said, that the project is congruous.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 5:1. MOTION CARRIES WITH COMMISSIONER SEWELL VOTING AGAINST AND COMMISSIONER TRUSLOW RECUSED.